

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WILLIAM J. PERRY
SALUTE TO THE NATION CEREMONY REMARKS, WITH PRESS REPORT
FORT LEWIS, WA
JUNE 30, 1994

Secretary Perry: Thank you very much, General Caveza. Today we celebrate freedom, and we honor the states and the territories that share that freedom under its most visible symbol--the stars and the stripes of the American flag.

As we celebrate freedom today, we remember that 50 years ago this nation and its allies were engaged in a titanic struggle against deadly tyrannies on both sides of the globe. In Europe, allied forces had just landed in Normandy in one of the defining moments of history. In the Pacific, allied forces continued to seize key islands to close in on the enemy's heartland. The 1st Corps itself was just completing tough, hard fought operations in New Guinea prior to its liberation of the Philippines. With a supreme effort, we triumphed over the tyrannies which we fought in the Second World War. In the Cold War that followed, we deterred the forces of the Soviet Union until its empire finally collapsed.

Today, we do not need the size of the forces that won World War II, nor even the military that stood vigilant during the Cold War. Freedom and democracy have spread to many parts of the world, and our ideas of individual rights and human liberty are increasingly taking root in the world. So, we can safely reduce and reshape our armed forces for today's challenge, and we are doing just that. But the world is still a dangerous place.

Even today we face security problems on both sides of the globe. In Europe, deep-seated hatreds and aggressive ambitions of leaders have led to atrocities in Bosnia--especially the ethnic cleansing that outrage our sense of human dignity. In Asia, we are maintaining our military vigilance while putting maximum diplomatic

pressure on North Korea to abandon a nuclear weapons program that threatens the peace and stability of that region of the world.

Just as we fashioned our forces to meet the requirements of a global conflict during World War II, we must shape forces for today's security challenges. We need capable, highly mobile, flexible forces that can respond quickly to a wide range of contingencies--from humanitarian operations to peacekeeping operations to regional conflicts. We need all of our services to work together as a team to project American power wherever and whenever it is needed.

This morning, I watched soldiers and airmen at McChord practicing to do just that. The ability of our forces to work together and the capability to project power from the United States are clearly evident in the military forces and facilities here in the State of Washington. To meet today's security needs, we are shaping a force that is very different from the force that was victorious 50 years ago. But there is one thing that has remained the same--indeed, which reaches back to the very signing of the Declaration of Independence--freedom can survive only when individuals are willing to step forward to defend it.

Daniel Webster said, "God grants liberty only to those who love it and are always ready to guard and defend it." That has been the bedrock of our freedom--the willingness of Americans to step forward to serve their country, especially in times of great danger.

That point was brought home to me most clearly three weeks ago when I stood on Pointe du Hoc in Normandy, overlooking the cliffs and the beaches that American troops had stormed five decades ago. I talked to many of the veterans there and heard first-hand accounts of what they had faced on D-Day. The enormity of their task was overwhelming, yet D-Day was won by the bravery, the sacrifice, and the spirit of individual soldiers. Seasick, wet, and cold, they swam and waded through neck-deep water to overcome enemy obstacles and fire, and they secured a toe-hold on the continent. Thousands gave their lives on those beaches and in the battles that followed to liberate millions in Europe.

The same was true in the Pacific. Americans in units such as the 1st Corps fought a tough enemy, often in the jungle under terrible conditions of heat, humidity, and disease. We will always remember and appreciate what they did in the cause of freedom.

As one D-Day veteran said, "You can manufacture weapons and you can purchase ammunition, but you cannot buy valor, and you cannot pull heroes off an assembly line." Heroes won World War II.

Some of the heroes had names we all know and remember such as Bradley and Eisenhower and MacArthur. But many more were unsung heroes. The countless young men and women who risked their lives and then returned home to build families, businesses, and communities. All too many fallen heroes rest in honored glory beneath fields of stars and crosses.

It was an honor to join the heroes of World War II. What they accomplished a half a century ago is a timeless and inspiring story of human persistence and triumph. They saved the world for freedom. In telling their story, we not only honor their courage, but we also remind ourselves that we cannot take liberty for granted. Peace and security require constant vigilance and strong defenses.

We recognize the enormous price that our men and women in uniform pay to protect our liberty, our peace, and our security. They risk their lives so that others may live in peace and without fear. This is the greatest work that God can have us do.

Outside my office at the Pentagon in Washington is a painting that I pass every day. It depicts a poignant scene of a serviceman with his family in church. Clearly, he is praying before a deployment and a long separation from his family. Below the painting is a wonderful quote from Isaiah. In it, God says, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah replies, "Here am I. Send me."

When the call came during World War II, millions of young American men and women answered with Isaiah's words. "Here am I. Send me."

That spirit, that willingness to say "send me" is still alive today. The 1st Corps is perfectly representative of that spirit. It draws its strength from active duty and from reserve units from almost every state in the union. Its soldiers stand prepared to deploy whenever and wherever the country calls. It is ready to make a difference for freedom. It truly is America's corps.

Thank you very much.

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DEFENSE SECRETARY SAYS FLEXIBILITY IS KEY FOR REDUCED MILITARY FORCE

By SHANNON JOHNSTON

(FORT LEWIS) - American armed forces are being reduced and reshaped to project U.S. military power around the world - wherever and whenever necessary, Defense Secretary William Perry told Fort Lewis troops yesterday.

Perry, who was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Army Reserves at Fort Lewis in 1950, was in the Seattle area yesterday for Rodeo '94 at McChord Air Force Base and for a "Salute to the Nation" ceremony.

More than 600 soldiers in battle fatigues took to the parade field, holding flags of the 50 states and facing Perry, who received the 19-gun salute appropriate to the rank of defense secretary.

"Fifty years ago, this country and our allies were engaged in fighting deadly tyranny in Europe," Perry said. "Today we don't need the size of forces in World War II or even of those who stood vigilant during the Cold War."

"But the world is still a dangerous place. Just as we fashioned forces to meet global requirements in World War II, now we must fashion troops which are highly mobile, flexible and able to respond quickly to any situation," he said.

"We must be prepared to project American military power wherever and whenever necessary."

The ceremony is meant to honor the states with a 50-gun salute, acknowledging the date they joined the Union and the

display of each state's flag.

Before his speech at Fort Lewis, Perry met with reporters at McChord, where he had been observing Rodeo '94, an annual international Air Force competition sponsored by the U.S. for Air Mobile Command units.

Rodeo '94 features airdrop, air refueling and ground operations competitions. More than 1,800 competitors, including teams from most Allied nations, came to McChord for the event.

"These operations are key to American military power and were absolutely essential to Desert Storm," Perry said.

"They are key not only to military operations, but also for peace-keeping operations and humanitarian aid."